

have some explicit authority. But their budget already under our budget is increased significantly. Now, under this bill, we increase it 10 times more, \$34 million to \$340 million, a huge increase. We are expecting those people to gear up and utilize that money. It looks like we are forming an additional bureaucracy. I also want you to watch the dollars.

In Wyoming, for years we have been talking about increasing the price of the tax on cigarettes by 15 cents. When I was in the State legislature in Wyoming, we talked about that. We usually talked about putting that money to health needs. Even talking about putting it to the health needs, it raised approximately \$8 million a year. I have to focus on the difference here between billion and million. In the States, a million is a lot of money. Out here, a billion is not much. But that 15 cents a pack raises \$8 million. We are told that \$1.10 a pack will raise \$6 million. It doesn't sound like very good math. It sounds like the usual Washington program where it comes back here, we keep a bunch of it, and we send a little bit back. If that is the case, the State would do it better. It would have more money for the States.

I am going to mention two final concerns that I have on this. When we passed the budget bill, we talked about the need to help Medicare with money that came from the tobacco. That is what we were going to do with all of the money from the tobacco settlement—put it into Medicare, shore that up. It is in bad financial shape. That would give us some more time to work on it. There is very little provision in this bill for doing anything for Medicare. We should take care of Medicare. That would be a medical use for the money. That would be money that non-smokers have been paying in to pay for smokers' problems that increase the cost of Medicare.

The final need that we have to have in the bill is a provision where we don't spend the money until we have the money. It disturbs me a lot that we are talking about putting an industry out of business but relying on ever-increasing revenues from this business going out of business. Somehow the basic counting instincts here just do not balance. We really have to be sure that the money gets collected before it gets spent if we are going to decrease the revenues.

So there are a lot of concerns there.

I hope my colleagues will go home to their States and discuss with the people there the complexities of this bill. I don't know that there has been that complex a bill before. We are not going to probably break it down into six separate bills. So there will be a long debate on it when we get back. Share your ideas. Share your concerns. And we will get with that when we come back.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Thursday, May 21, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,503,780,049,716.42 (Five trillion, five hundred three billion, seven hundred eighty million, forty-nine thousand, seven hundred sixteen dollars and forty-two cents).

One year ago, May 21, 1997, the federal debt stood at \$5,348,058,000,000 (Five trillion, three hundred forty-eight billion, fifty-eight million).

Five years ago, May 21, 1993, the federal debt stood at \$4,287,850,000,000 (Four trillion, two hundred eighty-seven billion, eight hundred fifty million).

Twenty-five years ago, May 21, 1973, the federal debt stood at \$453,228,000,000 (Four hundred fifty-three billion, two hundred twenty-eight million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,050,552,049,716.42 (Five trillion, fifty billion, five hundred fifty-two million, forty-nine thousand, seven hundred sixteen dollars and forty-two cents) during the past 25 years.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF RED CROSS BLOOD COLLECTING

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, as the United States fought World War II, Americans mobilized in support of the war effort like they never had before. Everyone was trying to find a way to help our troops battle the Axis and keep the world free and safe. Whether it was children flattening and saving tin cans that were used for scrap metal, or people growing fruits and vegetables in "Victory Gardens", everyone tried to find a way to make their own contribution to winning the war and supporting our men and women in uniform.

It was at this time that the American Red Cross took on the responsibility of collecting blood that would ultimately be used to help save the lives of Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, and Army Air Corpsmen wounded in action. The efforts of the Red Cross were truly a success as they helped to reduce the death rate among the wounded by fifty percent.

For the past fifty years, the American Red Cross has been responsible for administering the Nation's blood supplies and they have done a commendable job in ensuring that the United States has a ready and ample reserve of blood for those who need it. Just a few days ago, on April 30th, American Red Cross President Elizabeth Dole helped to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of that organization's Biomedical Services. Her remarks nicely illustrate the contributions and accomplishments of the Red Cross in administering the Nation's blood supply. I think that my colleagues and the public would be interested to read what Mrs. Dole had to say and I ask unanimous consent that her remarks be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

REMARKS OF ELIZABETH DOLE

Thank you, Paul, for that kind introduction and ladies and gentlemen, thank you so much. And special thanks to Donna Shalala, Secretary of Health and Human Services, and David Kessler, Dean of the Yale Medical School and former Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration. We are delighted you could be with us today as we mark the 50th anniversary of the most important of our national reserves: America's reserve of life, the American blood supply. Thank you, Donna and David, for your continued leadership, and for your steadfast dedication to the safety and quality of American health.

Aren't we thrilled to have Garth Brooks here. Garth, you have a magical hold on the spirit of our people. What a joy it is that you would share that bond with us. We are enormously grateful.

What a day! We are also so very pleased to be joined by the Oak Ridge Boys! Boys, your music puts the party in the birthday, and we thank you.

Also, many thanks to the other wonderful celebrities with us today—Lynda Carter, KENNEDY, and William Moses. We sincerely appreciate your generosity in joining us to celebrate our 50th birthday of Biomedical Services. And, welcome to Councilwoman Charlene Drew Jarvis, the daughter of Dr. Charles Drew, renowned plasma pioneer for the American Red Cross and leading authority on transfusion. The Charles Drew Institute honors his memory. Thank you, Charlene, for your support over the years.

As we observe this 50th anniversary, of American Red Cross Blood services, it's a time to take satisfaction in our past and pride in where we've been. The Red Cross started collecting blood during World War II in order to save soldiers' lives, and our efforts were credited with reducing the death rate among these soldiers to half that of their World War I counterparts. When peace came, we created America's first nationwide, volunteer blood collection and distribution system, assuring all our citizens access to one of the great medical advances of this century.

But health events in the last two decades rocked us to our very foundations. The age of blood-borne diseases such as AIDS and new forms of hepatitis swooped down on us with a vengeance. We knew we could no longer operate at the Red Cross as we had done for so many years. Which is why this year, our 50th anniversary, is a year to look forward, rather than back. Today I take great joy in announcing an historic achievement:

As the year closes, the American Red Cross will celebrate the completion of our nearly seven-year, \$287 million dollar transformation of our blood operations. This long-awaited milestone is the reason I stand here with so much confidence—and hope—for the future. The accomplishment of Transformation is a great, triumphant victory in our common endeavor to expand what is possible in health care.

And I'm also pleased to announce today that, following this speech, I am leaving on a nation-wide tour of blood drives and celebrity events to focus attention on the safety revolution in America's blood supply. Many of our citizens are still frightened of transfusions, and they should not be! Many millions still mistrust those red bags of life, and they must not! We have achieved a new American miracle in blood, and I will take that message across America. We will celebrate and we will educate but first, let me ruminate.

When I came to the Red Cross in February 1991, the legal and financial vulnerabilities of our blood operations threatened the very

viability of the Red Cross. The country was pretty worried about the safety of America's blood supply back then. And as the person newly responsible for half of it, so was I. Some of our Board members wanted us to get out of blood banking altogether, believing our duty to safeguard the rest of our historic organization demanded that we abandon this mission field. Between Congressional hearings, media exposés and enormous regulatory pressure, there were days when I wanted to get out, too.

Still, the question haunted us: if we left blood banking, who would fill our shoes? The Red Cross is not a public agency, but what we do—especially in blood—is a public trust. We weren't going to let America down. Not on our watch.

The blood supply was as safe as the current blood systems and contemporary scientists knew how to make it. But in the age of AIDS and other blood borne infectious diseases, wasn't there more we could do? We had to "think outside the box" with respect to existing science, blood supply management, and safety approaches.

We dreamed, in 1991, of where we wanted to go. But we did more than that. We mustered our courage and embraced Transformation as our ticket to ride. It was the most ambitious project the Red Cross had ever undertaken: the total redesign of how we collect, process, test, and deliver nearly half of America's blood supply. I dare say it is the most profound change any non-profit organization has made in recent memory!

At the time, it felt the way I imagine a Shuttle astronaut must feel on her first space walk letting go of the ship, taking her first step into the unknown. It felt as if our whole organization had let go. . . let go of the security of status-quo standards, let go of the financial certainty underpinning our entire operation, let go of what we knew, in search of what we hoped to find—but knowing that each step was backed up by a truly exceptional scientific team entirely committed to forging new frontiers. I feel so fortunate that Jim Ross with Brian McDonough and each member of his outstanding team answered my call to complete this challenge.

In 1993, the Food and Drug Administration imposed a consent decree on our blood services operations. But as David will tell you, we were already more than two years into Transformation. The consent decree was basically a codification or ratification of our far-reaching plan, with timelines and milestones for measuring our progress. And today, as we conclude Transformation, we also are wrapping up our last requirements under the decree.

With the completion of Transformation this year, we will have forced ourselves from the mind set of always doing things the way we had done them before. We already have left behind our days in the comfort of industry averages to become the undisputed leader in blood banking. Once we were weighed down with 53 non-standardized blood centers running 28 computer systems in a patchwork quilt of regions, each with its own operating procedures and business practices. Today we have one set of operational procedures, one set of business practices, and one state of the art computer system—which gives us the best national donor deferral system and the largest blood information data base in the world for transfusion medicine research.

We determined that today's demands were best met in high-volume, state-of-the-art, centralized labs, so we replaced our 53 testing facilities with 8 state of the art, high-tech laboratories that today are the leading centers of their kind in the world. This enables us to quickly incorporate medical technology as it evolves.

Perhaps most importantly, today we no longer fear finding our own faults. We ac-

tively seek them out, report them and then fix them, ourselves. We hired a leader in quality assurance who created an independent program, providing more than 200 experts to audit and consult with all of our fixed sites. We actively monitor for more than 150 possible deviations in manufacturing. And our folks, can and on occasion have shut down a process immediately, when they have found a serious deviation from standard operating procedure.

In short, we have a new, centralized management structure, a new information system, and the best quality assurance program in existence. We have consolidated and modernized testing and have strictly standardized procedures and training across our system. As a matter of fact, we now run the highly acclaimed Charles Drew Biomedical Institute—and provide leadership to the entire blood banking community.

We have moved to a position of leadership in an industry which has achieved phenomenal success in the face of frightening odds: In 1991, an American's risk of HIV transmission from a blood transfusion was one in 220,000. Today, it is nearly one in 700,000—more than a three-fold reduction in risk. I'd say that is worth cheering about, wouldn't you?

Today, I can say what I could not seven years ago: the Red Cross is in the blood business to stay. We are sure of our mission and we know how to fulfill it. No longer an organization constrained by yesterday's technology, we operate today with the gleaming precision and efficiency of what is still, for most in the world, only tomorrow's possibilities. We offer Cadillac quality coupled with Volvo security. Don't get me wrong: every car on the lot meets the government standard for safety. But like Cadillac and Volvo, we have set standards of our own.

Unlike car companies, however, we don't do what we do for a profit. The pins on our lapels and the patches on our sleeves remind us daily that we are in this business to fulfill a national trust, to live up to our moral commitment to do the best we can to ensure the well-being of the American people. We are also reaching out to the rest of the world, sharing the lessons we have learned from Transformation to help improve the safety and reliability of the world's blood supply.

Of course, modernization and improvement is a process that must never end. As David Kearns, the former chairman of Xerox, once said, "In the race for quality, there is no finish line." This could never be more true than in the blood banking business. We're determined to remain not only the industry leader in quality and safety, but to place ourselves in the forefront of new product development.

At our world-class Holland Laboratory, Red Cross physicians and scientists are evaluating and monitoring possible threats to the blood supply and working on many other new, cutting-edge technologies—some of which we will share with you today.

But all this technology wouldn't be worth a thing without the Red Crossers who make it work for America. They are the reason and the inspiration for our service. We have 1.3 million volunteers, 32,000 paid staff, and 4.3 million blood donors—that's 20,000 donors every day—I'd like to stop just a minute to give those quiet heroes a loud round of applause.

Yes, after 50 years in Blood Services—and spending the last seven years transforming them, the American Red Cross has much to celebrate. In addition to enhancing blood safety, our investment has given us the knowledge and confidence to shape our own future.

Before Transformation, the Red Cross and other blood banks around the country waited

for signals from the FDA that change was required. Today, the Red Cross is a leader of change. While Transformation the program is nearly complete, Transformation the process will be never ending.

There is a story I love about Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. When Justice Holmes was in his 90s, he took a trip on the Pennsylvania Railroad. As he saw the conductor coming down the aisle, he began patting his pockets, looking for his ticket. The conductor, recognizing the famous jurist, said, "Don't worry, Mr. Justice. I'm sure you'll find your ticket when you leave the train, and certainly the Pennsylvania Railroad will trust you to mail it back later."

Justice Holmes looked up at the conductor with some irritation and said, "My dear man, the problem is not, where is my ticket. The problem is, where am I going?"

Ladies and gentlemen, the American Red Cross knows where it's going! As we have led the nation in blood transformation, so we will set a new credo of business for businesses of the heart. But more than that, we are dedicated to saving and improving every life we can. We at the Red Cross want to be the model for non-profits in the next century. The status quo is no longer our milieu. Well into the new millennium, the Red Cross will seek out the cutting edge; we will be the people who question the range of possibilities—in blood banking as well as in every other aspect of our mission.

But we know we cannot accomplish all of our dreams by ourselves. We need the time and money, the brainpower and the lifeblood of Americans like you. Together, we will continue to imagine the unimaginable and attain the unattainable. Together, we will be privileged to touch, and in so doing transform, the millions of individual lives we are dedicated to serve.

On behalf of our entire Red Cross family, thank you for all you've done, and for all you continue to do. And on this special day, thanks for coming to our party.

THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in congratulating the people of the Republic of Georgia on the 80th anniversary of their independence.

Eighty years ago on May 26, 1918, following the collapse of the Russian Empire, the people of Georgia gained their own independence and established their own government. Tragically, Georgia's independence was short-lived. In March 1921, the Soviet Army reoccupied Georgia, beginning decades of further occupation, domination and repression.

Despite this persecution by the Soviet leadership, the spirit of the Georgian people could not be defeated. Throughout almost seventy years of Soviet rule, the people of Georgia never lost sight of their goal to be free from outside domination and influence.

Finally, in 1991, following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the people of Georgia were again able to realize their dream of independence, and their nation now enjoys a bright future. The election of President Eduard Shevardnadze and the election of a Parliament committed to legal reform in 1995 have encouraged economic growth and reforms in human rights.